



Abt Associates Inc.

# **Review of Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives**

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# Introduction

This document presents introductory information gathered on a wide range of neighborhood revitalization initiatives. In developing the list of initiatives to research, we began with the following list provided by the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation:

- HOPE VI
- Smart Growth America
- Homeownership Zones (HOZ)
- Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP)
- Asset-Based Community Development
- Health Neighborhoods Initiative
- Neighborhood Preservation Initiative
- Category B Pilot Program

We then solicited additional ideas from among Abt staff and consultants active in the community development field. We also conducted a search for foundations that fund national community revitalization programs. In identifying additional initiatives to research, we restricted our search to major revitalization efforts that have taken place on a national (or multi-city) level in the last 10 years. (An exception is the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which we included because it is a large-scale local effort that has served as a model for other local initiatives.) Based on these criteria, we identified the following additional revitalization efforts:

- Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC)
- Community Development Block Grant Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies (CDBG)
- Community Outreach Partnership Program (COPC)
- Living Cities
- Neighborhood and Family Initiative
- Rebuilding Communities/Making Connections
- Pew Partnership Small Cities Initiative
- Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Given the short time frame of this review, most of our research has focused on evaluation reports and other sources of information publicly available via the Internet, as well as studies conducted in-house. The following initiatives also have additional information through in-depth telephone interviews with experts:

- Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP);
- Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI);
- Making Connections (MC);
- Neighborhood and Family Initiative (NFI);
- Neighborhood Preservation Initiative (NPI);
- Category B Pilot Program;
- Baltimore Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative (HNI); and
- Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP).

The remainder of this document is organized as follows. The next section provides a context for interpreting the information provided and suggests issues to consider in identifying program models for further research in the next phase of the project. We then present a matrix that summarizes the initiatives reviewed along several basic dimensions. The matrix is followed by more detailed information on each of the initiatives, including evaluation findings and lessons learned where available. The final section of the document provides references for each initiative.

## Overview of Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives

The initiatives reviewed in this document are extremely diverse in scale, goals, and approach. For example, the initial list included HOPE VI, a \$5 billion federal initiative aimed at redeveloping distressed public housing developments, CCRP, a \$10 million effort focused on CDC capacity-building in four neighborhoods of the South Bronx, and Smart Growth America, a coalition of advocacy organizations promoting smart growth principles. Given the diversity of the initiatives reviewed, and the descriptive nature of much of the information presented, it is premature at this stage to extract overall lessons learned.

### What type of neighborhood is being targeted?

An important consideration in comparing and evaluating neighborhood revitalization models is the type of neighborhood being targeted. A common theme among revitalization efforts is that the more distressed the neighborhood, the larger the investment required, both in terms of the level of resources invested and the time frame for realizing neighborhood change. In turn, the level of investment may influence the leadership and organizational structure of the initiative. For example, large-scale revitalization efforts typically require significant public investment and partnerships beyond the immediate neighborhood.

The specific attributes of the target neighborhood also affect the choice of revitalization strategies. For example, Paul Brophy has argued that in “weak market” locations, that is, places where population loss is the primary threat to neighborhood stability, the revitalization strategy should include homeownership programs designed to attract middle income households to the community and flexible financing tools to support the development of mixed-income housing (Brophy and Burnett, 2003). As another example, initiatives that focus on small towns and rural communities—such as those involved in the Pew Partnership Small Cities Initiative—are likely to employ different tools than those in inner cities (although there is increasing interest in examining common ground between the two settings).<sup>1</sup>

In general, neighborhoods that already have a mixed-income character are believed to have important advantages over purely low-income communities as targets for revitalization, because they are attractive to developers and to both public and private investors. However, many of the initiatives reviewed target distressed low-income neighborhoods. HOPE VI, EZ/EC, and Homeownership

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Community Development Partnership Collaborative has launched an initiative to analyze the characteristics of “remote urban” and “remote rural” communities to identify where there may be common ground for collaborative community development activities. (See <http://www.cdpn.org>.)

Zones, for example, use large-scale investment to address major physical, social, and economic problems and encourage a greater mix of incomes in blighted areas. Several non-federal initiatives, such as CCRP and Living Cities, also target high-poverty neighborhoods. However, the scale of the neighborhoods – in terms of both population and area – is quite different among the programs. Other initiatives, such as Healthy Neighborhoods, the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative, and to some extent the Minneapolis NRP, focus on neighborhoods that are still functioning but at risk of decline. In such neighborhoods, an effective strategy may be small-scale investment that builds off existing assets to retain existing stakeholders and attract new buyers to the neighborhood. *An important next step in gaining a richer understanding of the most promising initiatives will be to develop a more precise taxonomy of the types of neighborhoods being served and the revitalization tools that have been found to be most effective for each neighborhood type.*

### **What is the revitalization focus and leadership structure?**

In addition to targeting different neighborhood types, the initiatives reviewed fund different types of activities. For example, HOPE VI, Homeownership Zones, Healthy Neighborhoods, and Living Cities, represent largely *housing-based* strategies, while CCRP, the Neighborhood and Family Initiative (NFI), and the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative, have a broader *program focus* that includes economic and human capital development as well. In addition the types of activities being funded, and the range of those activities—from discrete projects to programs aimed at comprehensive change—the initiatives use different vehicles to effect change. For example, some initiatives focus on *capacity-building* of community institutions, including CDCs and community residents, to carry out a range of community development activities, while others are primarily *project-focused*, with capacity-building as a secondary goal.

Related to the goal of capacity-building, sponsors of national revitalization efforts need to consider what the local *leadership structure* will be, including the number of lead organizations, the type of organization, and the evolution of leadership roles over time. The initiatives reviewed here represent a range of leadership structures—including initiatives led by one or more “strong” CDCs (CCRP), new collaborative structures between local foundations, community-based organizations, and residents (NFI), and resident-driven efforts (Healthy Neighborhoods, Minneapolis NRP). A common theme across initiatives, however, is the importance of having a “champion” to mobilize resources and implement the vision and meaningful participation by community residents (Promising Strategies, 2002). Another theme is that institutionalizing partnerships and leadership structures takes many years.

### **What is the framework for measuring outcomes and neighborhood impact?**

Many of the initiatives reviewed have struggled with developing outcome and impact measurements that are both meaningful and have the support of local stakeholders. Initiatives that are housing-based tend to focus on housing production figures, while capacity-building efforts often tend to devote significant attention to process outcomes. Relatively few initiatives have been able to measure neighborhood impact. Challenges in measuring neighborhood impact include few sources of quantifiable, systematic, and timely data with which to proxy neighborhood improvement; a wide range in the scale and characteristics of neighborhoods being targeted, sometimes even within the same initiative; and the interaction of multiple and overlapping revitalization initiatives. In addition to neighborhood impact, measures that address the cost effectiveness of a given initiative, such as investment per person impacted, are seldom reported.

# Summary Matrix of Literature Review Findings

Note: The matrix does not include Smart Growth America or Asset-Based Community Development because these are concepts shaping neighborhood revitalization initiatives rather than direct neighborhood efforts. It also does not include Neighborhood Reinvestment's Pilot B project. Descriptions of these concepts are provided in the final section of the document.

## Federal Initiatives

Name	Sponsor	Goal	Strategy/Tools	Neighborhood Type	Funding
HOPE VI	HUD	Revitalization of distressed public housing and surrounding neighborhoods	Focus on public housing revitalization with expected spillover effect on neighborhood	Distressed urban areas (usually single neighborhoods)	1993-2002: 193 grants, \$5 billion (~\$26 million per site); funds typically expended in 5-10 years
EZ/EC	HUD	Comprehensive revitalization of disadvantaged urban and rural communities	Creation of economic opportunity through a range of physical, economic, and human capital development strategies	Distressed urban and rural areas (may be multiple neighborhoods)	72 designated EZ/ECs in 1994; funding ranged from \$3 million (60 sites) to \$100 million or more (8 sites)
HOZ	HUD	Revitalization of blighted neighborhoods by development of HO units	Provide seed money to develop HO units, improve infrastructure, and provide direct assistance to buyers	Distressed urban areas (usually single neighborhoods)	\$50 million awarded to 12 sites in two funding rounds (1996 and 1997) (~\$4 million per site)
CDBG	HUD	Community revitalization through locally-defined housing and economic development programs	Broad range activities determined at local level. Some incentives for comprehensive strategies.	Type of neighborhood targeted is at the discretion of the local jurisdiction	In 2002, funding averaged \$2.9 million per eligible city or county and \$25 million per state.
COPC	HUD	Community revitalization through university community partnerships	Funding used outreach, technical assistance, and a range of community development projects developed by universities and nonprofit partners.	Single neighborhoods near universities; believed to be mainly distressed neighborhoods	\$45 million since 1994 to 97 grantees (~ \$450k per grantee); three-year grant term.

## Foundation-Sponsored and Other Non-Federal Initiatives

Name	Sponsor	Goal	Strategy/Tools	Neighborhood Type	Funding
CCRP	Surdna Foundation plus many other funders	CDC capacity-building to effect neighborhood change; focus beyond housing on comprehensive change	Four strong CDCs funded to develop and implement comprehensive revitalization plans (beyond housing)	Distressed urban areas (four large neighborhoods with significant prior investment)	Surdna made initial grant of \$3 million, followed by \$9.4 million from more than 20 public and private funders
Living Cities	NCDI (collaborative of foundations, HUD, private corporations, and national intermediaries—LISC and Enterprise)	CDC capacity-building to effect neighborhood change	Funds used to support real estate development by CDCs, human capital development programs through CDC/community partnerships, and CDC capacity-building	Distressed urban areas (neighborhoods all have a LISC presence)	\$254 million in loans/grants from NCDI between 1991 and 2001 to 23 cities (~\$11 million per city); \$118 million invested since 2001
Healthy Neighborhoods	City-specific public/private partnership	Housing- and asset-based revitalization	Housing-based strategy focused on resident (rather than CDC) leadership and asset-based approach; main tools are incentives for homeownership and small-scale physical improvements to attract people to the neighborhood.	Weak but still functioning urban neighborhoods (began in Battle Creek, MI; now in Baltimore and several other cities)	Baltimore: \$3 million from HUD and \$10 million from non-federal sources.
NFI	Ford Foundation	Creation of community “collaboratives” to effect neighborhood change; focus beyond housing on comprehensive change	Range of physical, economic, and human capital development programs; some funds earmarked for traditional development projects. Most programs small-scale and complementary rather than “comprehensive”	Distressed urban areas (poverty rates range from 29% – 52%)	\$3 million per site for operations and programs, plus dedicated support for TA and evaluation and \$3 million investment fund for development projects. Four sites, 10-year program.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategy/Tools</b>	<b>Neighborhood Type</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Rebuilding Communities	Annie E. Casey Foundation	Build capacity of neighborhoods to change their communities into safe and supportive places	Capacity-building strategy focused on developing resident power, improving housing and infrastructure, increased local collaboration. Funding flowed through a lead CBO in each neighborhood.	Neighborhoods with some assets but in decline (plus an existing revitalization effort)	\$15 million over 3 years across 5 sites (\$3 million per sites); 7-year demonstration
Making Connections	Annie E. Casey Foundation	Improving the lives of families and children in “tough” neighborhoods	Capacity-building strategy tries to increase collaboration among local agencies; development and analysis of data on neighborhoods assets; AECF provides technical assistance	Neighborhoods with some assets but in decline	Total funding not known; 10-year initiative that started in 1999; 22 cities
Neighborhood Preservation Initiative	Pew Charitable Trusts	Revitalizing and capacity building in working-class neighborhoods	Small investments to prevent decline; capacity-building of local agencies to sustain community development; visible results are emphasized; programs in crime prevention, economic opportunity, physical revitalization, and youth development. Led by a foundation in each city.	Weak but still functioning urban neighborhoods	Pew gave grants of up to \$800k per city to 9 cities (total of \$6.6 million) over 3 years. In addition, the local foundations in each city (the grantees) were required to obtain a 50% match.



<b>Name</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategy/Tools</b>	<b>Neighborhood Type</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Small Cities Initiative	Pew Charitable Trusts	Determining how communities create civic change using small cities as a guide	Evaluating the community planning process in small communities, each with discrete local projects; programs included human capital development, economic development, and housing. Small city focus believed to be a good way to observe change processes that could be applied to all cities.	Small cities (populations between 50,000 and 100,000); includes rural areas; not clear how distressed	\$6 million total: 14 cities allocated up to \$400k for a three-year period; 8 cities got an additional \$50,000 for one more year.
Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program	City of Minneapolis	Comprehensive resident-driven revitalization of city neighborhoods	Building organizational capacity of residents and neighborhoods to create housing, jobs, and community spaces. More than 50% of funding has to be spent on housing. Different levels of funding are allocated to different neighborhood types.	Participating neighborhoods are divided into 3 types “protection” (few problems); “revitalization” (fundamentally sound but beginning to experience problems); and “redirection” (serious problems)	\$20 million per year for 20 years, totaling \$400 million; 81 participating neighborhoods (includes all city neighborhoods); funding varies by neighborhood.

# Review of Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives

## HOPE VI

**Sponsor Organization:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

**Target:** Distressed public housing developments, typically in troubled inner-city neighborhoods.

**Approach:** Created by Congress in 1993 to address the problem of severely distressed public housing. Program involves large-scale demolition and redevelopment of public housing developments, typically of more than 300 units. Redevelopment can be either through rehab or new construction. Broader neighborhood revitalization is an increasingly important program goal, but the program has historically focused on the physical redevelopment of public housing and the provision of supportive services to public housing residents, not on economic development or infrastructure improvements in the surrounding neighborhoods. HOPE VI developments are typically located in seriously distressed neighborhoods.

Program provides planning and implementation grants to local housing agencies through an annual NOFA process. Grants were originally capped at \$50 million, now capped at \$20 million. National average of total development costs for HOPE VI projects (housing-related expenses only) is \$117,920 per unit (Khadduri, et al, 2003).

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** Early HOPE VI plans focused on replacing existing public housing with new public housing units and creating a broader range of incomes by increasing the share of working public housing residents. The program's goals and tools have evolved over time, and since 1996 HUD has emphasized:

- Mixed-financed, mixed-income development, including creating communities that blend public housing units with market-rate units and units financed by the low-income housing tax credit;
- Adherence to “new urbanism” principles and attention to neighborhood-wide redevelopment;
- Public-private partnerships and leveraging of funds; and
- Homeownership.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** Between 1993 and 2002, HUD funded 193 HOPE VI revitalization grants, totaling just over \$5 billion. An additional \$308 million funded 35 planning grants and 177 demolition grants.

Over time, grant amounts have become smaller and leveraging has increased:

- In 1993, HOPE VI grants were capped at \$50 million; in 2001, the maximum grant was \$35 million; in 2002 it was \$20 million.
- Most projects use a variety of public and private funding sources in addition to HOPE VI, including: HUD public housing capital funds; tax credit equity; city and county funds; private mortgage financing, and Federal Home Loan Bank. Across 11 early HOPE VI grantees, 58

percent of total project costs were funded by HOPE VI and 42 percent were funded from other private and public sources (Holin, forthcoming).

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** We have little systematic data about the neighborhood revitalization outcomes of HOPE VI, although there is considerable anecdotal evidence that HOPE VI can trigger or complement broader revitalization efforts, affecting the “extent and pace” of neighborhood change (Zielenbach, 2002). HOPE VI developments tend to be located in very distressed neighborhoods, so revitalization of these neighborhoods is likely to be a long-term process.

- A recent study of eight HOPE VI neighborhoods (Zielenbach, 2002) found increases in income, employment, and education levels of residents of HOPE VI neighborhoods between 1990 and 2000, as well as a reduction in crime. However, it is not clear the extent to which the neighborhood changes were caused by HOPE VI versus other factors such as strong regional economies; development efforts of local community groups; welfare reform; and targeted infusions of city, state, and other federal resources. Most of the neighborhoods were subject to these other forces. Also, as of 2000 several of the developments evaluated were not yet complete and fully reoccupied, so it may be premature to study their impact on the neighborhood.
- No studies are yet available isolating the impact of HOPE VI on local property values. A new Abt study examines changes in property values in two HOPE VI neighborhoods—New Haven and San Francisco—at different stages of the redevelopment process. A similar study by the Urban Institute of three HOPE VI neighborhoods has not been released by HUD.
- Program is not one-size-fits all. Program tries to balance goals of 1) providing quality housing for as many low-income people as possible and 2) exerting a positive influence on the surrounding neighborhood against local market conditions. In weak markets, HOPE VI sites that created all-new mixed income developments (vs. rehab and public housing-only developments) have been most successful in bringing new private investment to the surrounding area.

## **Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC)**

**Sponsor Organization:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Target:** Comprehensive revitalization of disadvantaged urban and rural communities

**Approach:** Created in 1993 to encourage comprehensive planning and investment aimed at economic, physical, and social development of disadvantaged urban and rural areas. The program built on lessons learned from earlier community revitalization efforts and involved a number of innovative features:

- Local design
- Community participation
- Comprehensive and long-term approach to revitalization
- Building community capacity
- Use of local benchmarking to foster accountability

Each funded community's efforts at zone transformation were expected to reflect four key principles:

- Economic opportunity
- Community-based partnerships
- Sustainable community development, and
- A strategic vision for change.

Under the initial round of funding announced in December 1994, 71 urban sites received EZ/EC designation. The EZ/EC designation was for 10 years. The major share of the federal funding went to the six sites designated as Empowerment Zones (EZs) and the remaining funds went to Enterprise Communities (ECs).

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** EZ/EC sites conduct a broad array of “sustainable community development” activities, including a variety of human services and education activities, physical improvement projects, housing and health initiatives, and public safety efforts.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** EZ/EC communities were given access to a variety of forms of funding. The two most common forms of federal assistance were Title XX Social Services Block Grant Funds (Title XX) and tax-exempt bond financing. Other sources of funding were empowerment zone employment credits, increased Section 179 expensing, economic development initiative (EDI) grants, and priority in other federal assistance programs. The level of funding varied by EZ/EC designation:

- Six *Empowerment Zones (EZs)* received a commitment of \$100 million in Title XX funds and access to employment tax credits, increased Section 179 expensing, and new tax-exempt bond financing;
- Two *Supplemental Empowerment Zones (SEZs)* received EDI grants of \$125 million and \$87 million, respectively, as well as Title XX funds and tax-exempt bond financing;
- Four *Enhanced Enterprise Communities (EECs)* received a \$22 million EDI grant (and a matching authorization under the Section 108 loan guarantee program), plus \$3 million in Title XX funds and new tax-exempt bond financing.
- Sixty *Enterprise Communities (ECs)* received \$3 million in Title XX funds and new tax-exempt bond financing.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** HUD sponsored an evaluation in 2001 of the 71 EZ/EC sites funded in 1994, including intensive study of 6 EZs and 12 ECs (Hebert, 2001). The evaluation found mixed outcomes in key program areas:

Program Area	Positive Impact of EZ/EC	Little or no Impact of EZ/EC
Business and Employment Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job growth occurred in five of the six EZs.</li> <li>• Job growth in four of the six EZs outpaced job growth in comparison and contiguous areas. (Two EZs did worse than their comparison areas.)</li> <li>• The number of EZ residents employed in EZ businesses and the number of both EZ resident- and minority-owned businesses increased substantially across the six EZs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In only three of the six EZs were increases in employment correlated with specific EZ programmatic activities. Moreover, in some of the EZs, such as Atlanta, employment increases may have been attributable to non-EZ activities.</li> </ul>

Program Area	Positive Impact of EZ/EC	Little or no Impact of EZ/EC
EZ Initiatives and Business and Workforce Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business and workforce development activities were widespread across the 18 EZ/EC intensive study sites, and business owners in the EZ sites reported that the climate for doing business in their zones had improved.</li> <li>• Workforce development activities placed as many as 16,000 EZ/EC residents in jobs, both inside and outside of the EZ/ECs in the 18 intensive study sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EZs continue to struggle with the special challenges of placing the long-term unemployed in jobs.</li> <li>• Businesses in the six EZs made only limited use of the program's Federal tax incentives, and a majority of the businesses using tax incentives reported that the credit was of little or no importance in affecting their hiring or investing decisions.</li> <li>• 65 percent of EZ businesses surveyed reported no benefits from being in the EZ.</li> </ul>
Community Participation and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal requirements for citizen participation increased opportunities for residents and community organizations to be involved in the EZ/EC decision-making process.</li> <li>• Extensive private and State and local government resources were leveraged as part of local EZ/EC Initiative activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen participation in EZ/EC initiative decision-making generally decreased from the strategic planning process to the program implementation stage.</li> <li>• Programs relied heavily on engagement with nonprofit and private partners. Creating and maintaining partnerships required significant time and effort. Building capacity within community organizations to undertake such long-term partnerships requires special attention, but not many sites invested heavily in such efforts.</li> </ul>

The evaluation also offered the following lessons learned regarding the program's principles of sustainable community development and strategic vision for change:

### ***Sustainable Community Development***

- How the study sites defined "sustainable community development" reflected their funding levels and grant terms:
  - EZ sites explicitly designed their programs to be 10-year efforts, and received funding (\$100 million in Title XX funds) somewhat commensurate with that time frame. Accordingly, many of the "sustainable community development" projects at these sites are seen as long-term efforts, and are ongoing.
  - EC sites received \$3 million in Title XX funds and, despite the federal view that they were making a commitment to a ten-year initiative, most designed their programs on a 3-to-5-year time frame.
- Networks of nonprofits have allowed the zone programs to offer a more varied array of services and to reach a broader population base. Sites have relied on nonprofits to a significant level to carry out their sustainable community development program activities, and to a greater extent than they did for their economic opportunity activities.

- A few ECs will leave behind such new institutions to continue to carry out all or part of their zone mission, but, overall, the ECs have made only a limited investment in building the capacity of nonprofit agencies, in part because of their shorter time perspective on the EZ/EC Initiative.
- There has been somewhat more effort in this regard among the EZ sites, but overall, most EZ sites have viewed nonprofit organizations primarily as service providers rather than as strategic investments to build long-term community capacity.
- EZ/EC sites that tried to build the capacity of their local nonprofit network have recognized how challenging this task can be, and acknowledge that it often requires a long-term commitment and considerable resources to achieve even basic functioning in new nonprofit organizations. Further, each time a nonprofit organization takes on a new function, additional technical assistance may be required.

### *Strategic Vision for Change*

The designers of the EZ/EC program believed a strategic, long-term vision for change was necessary to achieve successful revitalization of distressed communities. Although it is still largely anecdotal, evidence has emerged from the study that confirms the value of having a local strategic vision:

- Communities with a clearer strategic vision of comprehensive change, and one that could be effectively communicated to affected stakeholders, were in fact more likely to be successful at mobilizing support and in achieving progress in their zone activities.
  - It is important that the vision be more than just an articulation of themes or concepts; it needs to provide a guide for how the vision will be operationalized in specific programs and activities.
  - Communities in which the vision lacked strategic clarity, or where the strategic plan failed to describe mechanisms for implementing the vision's basic concepts, often experienced delays and diffusion of effort, and missed opportunities to leverage other resources.
- In many of the intensive study sites, the level of resident understanding of the zone mission declined over time, illustrating the difficulty of establishing and maintaining a broadly understood and shared community revitalization strategy.

## **Homeownership Zones (HOZ)**

**Sponsor Organization:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Target:** Revitalizing blighted neighborhoods through the construction of entire neighborhoods of new single-family homes.

**Approach:** Beginning in Fiscal Year 1996, HUD began offering seed money for communities to revitalize vacant and blighted properties. Through a competitive funding process, six cities in 1996 and an additional six in 1997 were awarded several million dollars to reclaim brownfields and other distressed neighborhoods. Communities then use HUD money to help leverage additional investment

in the area by creating entire new neighborhoods of new, single-family homes (Homeownership Zones). Communities are encouraged to plan for mixed-income and mixed-use developments, with pedestrian-friendly atmospheres that make use of public transportation. Homeownership Zones generally make up several hundred new housing units close to major employment centers.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** Eligible activities differ by funding year. FY96 grantees were given Section 108 loan guarantees in addition to their basic grant. The grants had to be used to strengthen these loan guarantees or the projects where the loans were used.

FY96 grantees could use their funds for:

- Property acquisition
- Housing rehabilitation
- Site preparation
- Special economic development activities, including new housing construction with CDBG.

FY97 grantees could use their funds for:

- Property acquisition
- Housing construction or rehabilitation
- Site preparation
- Direct financial assistance to homebuyers
- Homeownership counseling
- Construction of public improvements to complement the HOZ
- Administrative costs (up to 5% of total grant)

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** In the FY96 funding cycle, HUD provided \$30 million in EDI funds to support \$54 million in Section 108 loan guarantees. In the FY97 funding cycle, HUD provided \$20 million in recaptured Nehemiah Grant funds. Unsuccessful applicants in the FY97 cycle were given technical assistance through HUD’s College of Experts program. No funding has been available since FY97.

**Outcomes or Evaluation Findings:** No evaluation of this project has been completed.

## Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

**Sponsor Organization:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Target:** Community revitalization through housing and economic development programs for low- to moderate-income households

**Approach:** Created in 1974, CDBG allocates federal funding to states, cities, and urban counties according to a formula based on population, poverty, age of the housing stock, and other needs factors. The program has a common goal of “reducing disparities in well-being among neighborhoods,” but specific goals and strategies are at the discretion of local communities.

In 1995, HUD provided additional incentives (such as reduced reporting burdens) to cities and counties (not states) that designed “comprehensive community revitalization strategies” (HUD Notice

CPD-96-01). HUD defined successful neighborhood revitalization strategies as those that “bring together the neighborhood’s and the larger community’s stakeholders to forge partnerships” that:

- Obtain commitments to neighborhood building;
- Make neighborhoods attractive for investment
- Generate neighborhood participation;
- Support the use of neighborhood intermediary institutions; and
- Foster the growth of resident-based initiatives.

Further, HUD specified that the strategies should show “substantial improvements” in the neighborhood and “create meaningful opportunities for residents” during a 5-year time frame, although the neighborhood does not have to be fully revitalized within that period.

HUD suggested that grantees develop benchmarks for performance measurement but did not specify the benchmarks.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** Activities and tools vary according to local strategy. Eligible activities include: acquisition/disposition of real property; public improvements and facilities (e.g., senior citizens center, recreation center, day care center); clearance; public services (e.g., child care, health care, job training/education programs, recreation programs, drug abuse counseling/treatment, and services for homeless persons); interim assistance; relocation payments/assistance; rehabilitation of residential, commercial/industrial, or other nonprofit owned, nonresidential buildings; historic preservation; lead based paint hazard evaluation and reduction; code enforcement; special economic development; assistance to microenterprises; homeownership assistance; urban renewal completion; technical assistance to increase capacity of public/private non-profits; assistance to institutions of higher education; and program administration costs related to planning and execution of CDBG assisted activities.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** Funding is allocated annually by block grant formula to states, cities, and counties. In 2002, HUD allocated \$1.3 billion across 50 states and Puerto Rico (average of \$25 million per state), and \$3 billion to 1,041 cities and counties (average of \$2.9 million per city/county).

**Outcomes or Evaluation Findings:** 2002 Urban Institute study of the impact of CDBG spending on urban neighborhoods (Walker, 2002) analyzed neighborhood outcomes in 17 cities between 1994 and 1997. The study focused on neighborhoods in which the average annual spending per poor person was at least \$86,737 and cities that included a range of neighborhood types.

The study found that CDBG spending had a positive impact on three of four indicators studied: median loan amount, loan approval rate, and number of business establishments. CDBG spending had a negative impact on the number of loan applications. There are some significant caveats to these findings:

- The study was not specific to communities that created comprehensive community revitalization strategies, nor did it specify the particular CDBG interventions being funded or take into account previous CDBG-funded activity, other public investments in the community, and broader regional economic trends;



- The study sample of 17 cities was not nationally representative and including neighborhoods receiving less than \$87,737 per poor resident might have changed results; and
- Interviews with local respondents yielded mixed results: local informants agreed with just 27% of the researchers' categorizations of neighborhood performance.

## Community Outreach Partnership Center Program (COPC)

**Sponsor Organization:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Target:** Community revitalization through university-community partnerships.

**Approach:** The COPC program fosters and evaluates collaborations between universities and their communities. HUD started the program in 1994 to engage college and universities in community development. This program assumes that in order for university involvement in a community to be successful, mutually beneficial partnerships must be formed with the community. This proved to be challenging. Activities were generally designed to provide assistance or support to nonprofit agencies in the community, which in turn provided assistance to community residents.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** COPC has supported a broad range of community development activities, including physical development and improvement of housing and community facilities; educational programs; life skills training; workforce development; economic development; community planning; community development technical assistance and training; community service; legal and health services; and information technology.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** HUD was the primary sponsor of this initiative, though universities and community groups leveraged additional funding in their communities. HUD invested approximately \$45 million in the COPC program since 1994, funding more than 100 colleges and universities. This money acted as seed money for university-community partnerships to leverage additional funding for community development initiatives.

**Outcomes or Evaluation Findings:** HUD sponsored an evaluation of the COPC program conducted by the Urban Institute in 2002. The main findings were as follows:

- The most successful projects were those in which students participated in the community outreach as part of their coursework and when faculty members acted in a technical assistance capacity.
- The least successful projects were those that attempted to provide coursework for community residents and applied research projects.
- Among the sample site projects attempted, participants considered 67% of projects at least partially successful.
- Participants considered 45% of activities undertaken to be fully successful.
- Only 10% of projects completely failed or never got started.

Additional lessons learned related to the process of institutionalizing university-community partnerships:

- Institutionalizing these relationships takes longer than the three years HUD's program allows. Many of the COPC partners requested no-cost extensions to help their programs continue to develop. Partnerships with little history prior to the COPC grant had the most trouble in institutionalizing their efforts.
- The economic stability of the university has a significant impact on the success of institutionalization. Universities with large endowments tend to have better facilities, better paid faculty, and more graduate students with a desire to reach out to the community. Universities with more limited finances cannot absorb the additional costs of community outreach programs not funded by the COPC grant.
- Universities with specific administrative offices for coordinating outreach efforts are far more successful at institutionalizing community outreach efforts. Centralized offices help coordinate and monitor university relations with the community, ensuring a higher standard of quality.
- The participation of key faculty members is an important component of institutionalization. Often, adjunct faculty or consultants are typically involved in community outreach but have little ability to influence permanent staff members to do the same. It is more important for faculty and students to participate in the outreach efforts in order to make it more central to the university's traditions.
- Self-assessment during the institutionalization process helps sites determine what is working and where they should refocus their efforts.
- Certain disciplines lend themselves better to community outreach more than others. In order to sustain larger efforts at outreach, university departments will need to change the way they view community outreach, making it a more central part of their curriculum.
- Both large-scale umbrella-like community development partnerships and smaller project-level relationships can be effective.

## Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program

**Sponsor Organization:** Surdna Foundation and multiple partners

**Target:** Capacity-building for four housing-based CDCs to address social and economic needs of neighborhoods beyond housing. Attempted to improve the quality of life of low-income people in these neighborhoods

**Sites:** Four neighborhoods in South Bronx, NY; originally covered approximately 250,000 people

**Approach:** The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP) was started by the Surdna Foundation in 1992 in an effort to turn around the South Bronx, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the United States at that time. CCRP began with a six-year demonstration (1992-1998) designed to support and strengthen South Bronx CDCs as they developed and tested strategies aimed at comprehensive community revitalization. Six CDCs were invited to participate in the demonstration, although two eventually dropped out of the program. The experiment was to test whether CDCs could be effective neighborhood intermediaries capable of directing comprehensive community revitalization efforts.

CCRP's approach is based on several principles common to most comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs):

- Selection of community-based organizations to take the lead in neighborhood organizing;
- Strengthening local collaborations and linkages;
- Improving access to skills training, jobs, and education;
- Improving social and other services;
- Boosting economic development; and
- Addressing environmental concerns.

CCRP is distinct from other CCIs in its:

- Pragmatic approach to comprehensive community development (“doable” projects and quick results);
- Reliance on well-established and entrepreneurial CDCs with proven track records;
- Modest scale of funding;
- Approach to directing and managing the demonstration (involvement of CCRP’s Program Director in networking and brining in new funding sources);
- Emphasis on community-based collaboration rather than creating a new neighborhood governance structure.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** The CDCs have helped create new jobs, both at the CDCs and through private sector employers. The CDCs created the New Bronx Employment Service (NBES), a job readiness and placement service. The Neighborhood Employment Program is a program at NBES targeted to residents receiving public assistance, using the EarnFair welfare-to-work curriculum. CCRP also formed the New Bronx Maintenance Company, which provides jobs to South Bronx residents and works on both community development and private sector maintenance jobs. CCRP also facilitates the Bronx Health Insurance Program, which helps participants enroll in Medicaid, Child Health Plus, and Family Health Plus insurance programs.

*Leadership Structure:* Four CDCs led the initiative both as lead agencies in their respective neighborhoods and as a collaborator in the initiative as a whole. Each of the CDCs had already demonstrated capacity to accomplish physical revitalization. The energy, capacity, and experience of the CDC’s Executive Director were the key factors in a CDC’s selection. CCRP funded two new staff people at each CDC – a Project Manager and an Outreach Worker – whose responsibilities were entirely CCRP related. The CDC collaborative reports to a consortium of funders and sets plans during monthly meetings of the CDC Executive Directors. The CDCs selected the target neighborhoods, with the advice that neighborhoods should be *large enough to be important but small enough to be manageable*. The neighborhoods also generally had a significant share of housing. CCRP’s coverage area originally encompassed about 250,000 residents, or just over 40,000 residents per neighborhood (with the original six CDCs participating).

At the end of the demonstration, the four CDCs entered into a second phase of the program. The CDCs incorporated CCRP Inc. to sustain and expand the progress in their neighborhood. The CDCs in the community controlled an affordable housing portfolio of over \$500 million, but needed other partners to bring in the infrastructure to help sustain the neighborhood. When the demonstration phase was over, some of the participating CDCs expanded while others downsized. CCRP Inc. has remained the supervising intermediary of the initiative since the demonstration phase ended, but its existence is uncertain beyond 2003. Current funding trends do not favor intermediary-led initiatives.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** Surdna Foundation made the first commitment to CCRP of \$3 million in 1991. Between 1991 and 1998, 20 additional funders contributed an additional \$9.4 million in grants. Over \$100 million in additional funding was leveraged because of CCRP seed money.

In addition to Surdna Foundation, funders include: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Chase Manhattan Foundation, Citigroup Foundation, Clark Foundation, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, European American Bank, Industrial Bank of Japan, LISC, New York State Department of Health, Office of Community Services of HHS, Open Society Institute, SEEDCO/Non-profit Assistance Corp., Pew Charitable Trusts, Rockefeller Foundation, Uris Brothers Foundation, and Wells Fargo Foundation.

The New Bronx Maintenance Company was funded through a \$200,000 grant from the Office of Community Services at HHS and a matched loan from LISC. NBMC's own revenue will sustain the program in the future. CCRP created a health care center in a neighborhood that had no similar services by leveraging. One funder provided \$300,000 as seed money, which they attracted several million dollars in leveraged funding. The facilities were housed in two buildings that the CDC already owned, with help from some city organizations and local hospitals.

**Outcomes or Evaluation Findings:** CCRP funded an evaluation of the demonstration in 1998 (Spilka and Burns, 1998). The evaluation focuses on outcomes related to CDC capacity building. Noteworthy neighborhood outcomes (as of 1998) include:

- Almost 400 people have been served by the Bronx Health Insurance Program.
- The New Bronx Maintenance Company has painted public spaces, fire escapes, and apartments in CDC-owned buildings. It will offer its painting, maintenance, and janitorial services to businesses outside the South Bronx.
- The New Bronx Employment Service has placed about 2,000 residents in quality jobs since 1996.
- Three CDC-sponsored health care centers were opened in three different neighborhoods.
- At the end of the demonstration, the four CDCs together created the CCRP Inc. to sustain and expand their joint efforts. The CDCs see CCRP Inc. as critical to their future since they believe that neutral and fully-dedicated staff support for current and future shared programming is essential.

This program set out to improve the quality of life for poor people in South Bronx neighborhoods. To measure changes in quality of life, they looked at new supports that were created, such as childcare, jobs, and parks. The more difficult task was measuring community building. In some sense, this can never be definitively measured. CCRP was careful never to take credit for outcomes that were likely due to their efforts, but could not be directly linked to CCRP. For example, crime rates were greatly reduced in these neighborhoods during the CCRP demonstration. CCRP was training and helping to employ large numbers of people at this time. These two events were likely related, but it is difficult to prove the relationship.

The evaluators identified a number of lessons learned from the CCRP demonstration. Spilka and Burns (1998) provide a very detailed discussion of lessons for other cities, funders, and evaluators. Overall, the demonstration showed that large-scale CDCs with strong leadership and solid track

records *are* strong candidates for leading comprehensive initiatives, because they are well-positioned, entrepreneurial, and deeply invested in their communities and therefore able to be successful in taking on a CCI. With support, established CDCs can expand their missions and diversify staff and programs, and also effectively capture new, stable public and private resources to sustain new programs over time.

However, the evaluation also found that the new administrative and staff demands put very significant pressures on the already thinly staffed organizations, and that despite their track records, learning to work together and being open to constructive criticism did not always come easily for all of the CDCs. As a result,

- *Carefully evaluating CDCs' organizational and administrative capacities* and readiness to take on these new organizational challenges is very important, as is understanding each CDC's true level of comfort in working collaboratively with outsiders.
- *Investment in program-related staff* (by CCRP) was critical to CDCs' abilities to support the broader planning and program development activities that established the initiative in their neighborhoods and provided the opportunity to build the program knowledge, identify new sources of support, and establish stable funding to sustain the broader programs that are now in place.
  - Core support of project-dedicated staff is needed not just at start-up but must be ongoing to sustain the new broader agendas and increased complexity that come with participation in the CCI.
- The demonstration highlighted the critical importance to the overall success of the demonstration of finding a *seasoned and respected individual to serve as the program administrator*.
  - CCRP's Program Director played a key role in helping the CDCs link to new resources and managing the diverse interests of the CDCs and the funders.
  - For CCIs that have scale, complex domains of activity and numerous grantees, providing a *full-time* program director is essential.
- *Early investment in physical planning with a strategic action emphasis* can help to put in place sound "blueprints" that guided the CDCs as they move toward broader roles in their neighborhoods.
  - These helped capture the shared vision of residents and other neighborhood stakeholders and played an important role in attracting large-scale public and private support.
- *CDCs must be able to find funding to supplement and replace* the core program-related support provided by the sponsor organization (CCRP) in order to continue their roles and activities at the end of the demonstration.

- Since this type of funding is hardest to find, CDCs need to start early to strengthen their own fund-raising skills and identify alternative long-term soft funding.
  - CDCs must also be prepared to identify new ways of managing their own businesses—for example, by gaining higher revenues from their properties and negotiating for more overhead on programs and projects—to increase revenue.
- Under the proper conditions and with enough time, CDCs participating in an initiative can build a *collaborative structure* that they value; sustaining the CDC collaborative after the demonstration phase ends will require that each of the CDCs demonstrate ownership in it and be prepared to support independent staff.
- By *creating flexible access to significant amounts of first money*, CCRP enabled the CDCs to be taken seriously by other funders and investors.
- *Collaborative grantmaking* was a major advantage:
  - With 20 funders each contributing a different amount of resources to CCRP, a total pool of \$9.4 million was amassed. From this, the CCRP participants raised an approximate additional \$100 million for CCRP-related efforts.
- It is important for a CCI to set *ambitious goals*, and at the same time to aim for some *early and visible results*.
  - Long-term objectives were quickly and regularly reinforced through a series of concrete, visible projects. These results continued to generate support among funders, the CDCs and all in their communities for business that is very hard work.
- Funders must be prepared to *support initiatives over a long period of time and with large amounts of money*.
  - At the end of the 6-year demonstration, much was accomplished but much remains to be done. CCIs require building consensus among various interest groups and taking on the tougher community problems, which can take a long time to work through.
- *Effective collaborations can be established between funders and grantees over time*, provided that the key conditions of mutual respect, shared values and objectives, and open communication are present.
  - As with other CCIs, the CCRP partnership did not happen immediately, but only after significant testing, negotiating and delivering among all the players involved.
- Funders of CCIs need to balance the focus on a single lead agency with those that support the development of other organizations.
  - Funders and managers must maintain a concern for overburdening the lead CBOs beyond their own expertise and management capacity.

- Funders must assess the degree to which the initiative should reach toward a broader community building effort if resources are not available to increase capacity in other sectors of a community. CCRP made a clear choice in its design to focus its limited resources to strengthen the *CDC's capacity to expand its own role in accomplishing broader community objectives*.
- *Residents should be involved at a level that is meaningful to them.* Residents should play a role in setting neighborhood goals and priorities and should be involved in the planning process. It may not make sense for them to participate in program implementation.
- *Business leaders should be involved early in the process.* Earlier involvement by local businesses could have facilitated some block initiatives and job creation.

The former director of CCRP has brought this model to Milwaukee and Chicago. The pilot program in Chicago has been so successful that the MacArthur Foundation has chosen to fund an additional 14 neighborhoods over a ten-year period. The New Communities Program, as the Chicago CCRP initiative is called, is expected to receive nearly \$15 million in funding from MacArthur.

## Living Cities

**Sponsor Organization:** The National Community Development Initiative (foundations, nonprofits, financial institutions, and federal government)

**Target:** Troubled inner-city neighborhoods.

**Approach:** The first decade of the NCDI project was funded in three rounds: 1991-1994, 1994-1997, and 1997-2001. The initiative began its second decade in 2001 with plans to continue through 2011. Among the various funders involved in the project throughout its existence, some stayed over all rounds, and others funded only certain rounds of the initiative. NCDI money is funneled through LISC and Enterprise, which act as national intermediaries. These partners meet semiannually to discuss priorities, but NCDI itself has very few staff (2-3) running it, with the intermediaries in charge of most administration. High-level executives from the partner organizations are involved in these meetings, resulting in quick decision-making abilities.

The goal of NCDI is to build the institutional capacities of CDCs so they can better effect change in distressed communities. NCDI funding reaches about 300 CDCs in 23 cities. The cities were chosen because one of the intermediaries had a presence in that city and at least one funder had a special interest or opportunity in that city.

The new decade (2001-2011) also has 5 funder initiatives it is trying to achieve:

- A closer examination of public policy issues and how NCDI's experiences can help shape public policy.
- Improve CDCs' use of information technology.
- Increase the leadership capacity of CDCs through a human capital initiative.
- Increase communication with the nation about what Living Cities has taught NCDI.

- A focus on four pilot cities (Twin Cities, Miami, Chicago, Baltimore) to make a deeper impact on these cities by strengthening partnerships with community groups.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** Because NCDI funds the activities of CDCs, the initiative works primarily in real estate and capacity building.

*Real Estate Development and Support.* Most CDC activity was in real estate development, primarily because CDCs had focused a large part of their work on this area for most of their histories. Real estate is generally easier to fund and provides more visible results in the community, thereby establishing the legitimacy of the CDC as an agency able to effect change in the community. Real estate projects used \$174 million in NCDI funding, 91% of which was for up-front, interim financing (project design, feasibility studies, property acquisition, etc.) that CDCs had trouble obtaining from other sources.

*Non-Real Estate Projects.* CDCs partnered with local agencies to work on childcare, employment training, and community safety initiatives, among others.

*Capacity Building.* A portion of the technical support, training, and general operating funds for the participating CDCs came from NCDI via the local intermediary offices. NCDI money was also used to leverage funding from “local operating support collaboratives” to help further support capacity building and to create community ownership of the initiatives. Sixty million dollars of NCDI funding went toward capacity building.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** NCDI is the overseeing agency for this initiative, which supports two national intermediaries: The Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) and The Enterprise Foundation. These in turn work with hundreds of CDCs in the 23 chosen cities. Its funding comes from non-profit foundations, government agencies, and financial institutions (including banks and insurance companies). The CDCs also form “local operating support collaboratives,” which are local governments, banks, corporations, and foundations that come together to focus local funding and resources on CDC development and capacity building. LISC provides loans, grants, training, and technical assistance to CDCs to develop institutional capacity. Enterprise works with PHAs and nonprofits in a similar fashion.

Over the first decade, \$254,000,000 in loans or grants were used from NCDI to fund efforts at the CDCs. The total real estate development costs for projects at least partially funded by NCDI was \$2.3 billion. An additional \$5.5 billion was leveraged to do other real estate development in the 23 cities.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** The program was evaluated by the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning and the Urban Institute. The study found the following outcomes:

- Each dollar of NCDI funds was leveraged with \$2 of other funding in most cities.
- In addition to the \$174 million from NCDI for real estate development, the intermediaries raised and committed an additional \$261 million.
- In the 23 cities, 83,849 affordable housing units were built over the decade, of which 24% were partially funded by NCDI.



- NCDI money was more often used in developing home-ownership units (one-third of all NCDI-funded units compared to less than one-sixth of CDC-produced units) compared to the overall unit production.
- NCDI funding produced affordable housing units in 472 projects.
- 1.6 million square feet of facilities were also produced, including community facilities such as health clinics and day-care centers, as well as commercial and industrial space.

NCDI also helped improve CDC capacity, as evidenced by the following results:

- CDCs with good reputations in the NCDI cities increased significantly.
- The number of CDCs able to produce more than 10 housing units per year nearly doubled in each city.
- More CDCs had the operating budgets to sustain their programs and diversify their activities.
- The increased use of NCDI funds for long-term CDC funding freed up staff to work on projects rather than constantly seeking short-term funding sources.
- More loans became available for construction in communities where CDCs operated.
- CDCs were able to improve their neighborhoods so significantly that it impacted the private real estate market. Some communities have improved so much that the main concern is gentrification.

## Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative

**Sponsor Organization:** City-specific public/private partnerships

**Target:** Building home equity and strengthening the social fabric of communities that are “in the middle.”

**Approach:** The Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative is a model developed initially in Battle Creek, MI that has since been adopted in other cities, most publicly in Baltimore. Healthy Neighborhoods targets neighborhoods that are “in the middle” or “on the cusp” – neighborhoods that have weak but still functioning real estate markets, appear to be stable, but are in fact suffering from disinvestments of both money and civic engagement. The strategy seeks to turn these neighborhoods into healthy neighborhoods, meaning places where residents want to and do invest time, money, and energy into the neighborhood and their homes. Further, the goal is for residents in these neighborhoods to manage neighborhood issues on their own. The focus is on residents taken control of their neighborhood rather than relying on CDCs or other community organizations to take the lead.

The Healthy Neighborhoods approach is a demand-side rather than supply-side housing strategy for neighborhood revitalization. Success is not measured by the monetary amount of investment or number of housing units built. Rather, the performance of the housing market, measured by increased house prices and increased demand for housing, is the indicator of success in this model. Residents and new buyers showing confidence in the future of the neighborhood is another indicator of success.

This model focuses on emphasizing what is positive about a neighborhood and capitalizing on these attributes rather than trying to target and eliminate problems in the neighborhood. Individual investments in a neighborhood, such as the decision to buy a home there or to invest time and money in keeping up an existing home, are guided by the issues of choice, competition, confidence, and

predictability. The argument surrounding choice is that spending on housing is based primarily on consumer wants rather than needs. In a healthy neighborhood, more residents choose to make investments in their home. Neighborhoods must also be able to compete with other housing choices, with constantly changing competitors, year after year. Confidence in a neighborhood is expressed by the demand for housing in the neighborhood and the willingness of existing owners to invest in their homes. Residents also value predictability in their neighborhoods, relying on unspoken agreements about expected levels of maintenance and courtesy among neighbors. When neighbors no longer interact, these unspoken agreements tend to fall apart.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** The Healthy Neighborhoods model uses a variety of techniques to strengthen the fabric of communities. The key elements of this strategy are:

- Targeting the strongest blocks in a community for the initial stages of the program;
- Emphasizing the positive assets of a community rather than problems that need solving;
- Below market rate financing that is available both to current residents for making property improvements and to new buyers for rehabilitating their new homes up to the new neighborhood property standards;
- Changing the mindsets of residents and community agency staff to become marketers of their community and marketing their new image to realtors and lenders; and
- Focusing on a variety of small block projects that produce visible neighborhood changes.

Healthy Neighborhoods funding primarily goes to home improvement loans to help homes that need minor repairs to look better. This funding could go to lighting, landscaping, painting, and other surface improvements. There are no income restrictions in this program because restricting assistance to low-income groups may indicate to outsiders that a neighborhood is in trouble. Loans are given to those who can pay them back; the program goal is to minimize foreclosure in the neighborhood.

Exact criteria for defining these neighborhoods have never been established, but some general indicators for this type of neighborhood are: a decent homeownership rate (around 50 percent), the presence of some vacant properties that linger just long enough to discourage investment in the area, some drug activity and crime, and a housing market that is neither in demand nor rapidly declining. These neighborhoods would not be described as dangerous, but they are beginning to decline.

*Leadership Structure:* In Baltimore, the Baltimore Community Foundation administers the program and gives grants to local agencies. An existing neighborhood groups runs the program locally, but this need not be a CDC. There must be an organizational base in place, which could be a nonprofit or a neighborhood association, as well as a strong Executive Director and some evidence that the organization is already addressing some revitalization needs in its target neighborhood. For some agencies, the Healthy Neighborhoods strategy is a complementary strategy to what is already being done, while for others it becomes the primary strategy. Nonprofits provide some technical assistance for design issues and marketing. In Baltimore, there are plans to incorporate a nonprofit that will continue the initiative in the future.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** In Baltimore, the Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative was funded by \$3 million from HUD and approximately \$10,000,000 from non-federal sources (see exhibit below). Partners include the State of Maryland, Community Legacy, Baltimore City's Department of Housing and Community Development, Abell, Goldseker, Fannie Mae, France-Merrick and

Baltimore Community Foundations, Community Capital of Maryland, Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative and 12 lending institutions in the Baltimore area. Baltimore also used the Historic Preservation Tax Credit program and a grant from HUD in its initiative.

In the pilot, each site received between \$25,000 and \$50,000 in operating funds and project support of up to \$25,000 per neighborhood from the Baltimore Community Foundation.

<b>Baltimore Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative – Financial Commitments to the Two-Year Pilot Program</b>		
<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Federal Government (HUD)	\$3,000,000	Capital pool for purchase and rehab financing at 3 percent interest rate
State Government (MD)	\$1,000,000	Capital pool for purchase and rehab financing at 3 percent interest rate
National and Local Foundations (6)	\$1,200,000	Staff at lead organization, training and operating costs, community-self-help projects, staff at local nonprofits
Private Lenders (14)	\$115,000	Operating costs
	\$6,200,000	Below market first mortgage loan pool
Community Development Finance Institutions (1)	\$1,000,000	Construction loan fund

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** David Boehlke, who helped create the first Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative in Battle Creek, MI, did an evaluation of the Baltimore program, which reported the following:

- One neighborhood realized a 10% increase in house price sales and had its first bidding war for a house that sold above the asking price.
- 34 rehab and purchase/rehab loans were issued totaling \$1.1 million
- 59 more loans are in the process of closing, totaling \$2.7 million
- Neighborhoods have created new block captains, many of whom are new to community development projects and are participating in other projects
- In one neighborhood, the average house price of homes sold in 2002 since the initiative began is 22% higher than the average sales price in 2000.

In addition to these positive outcomes, Baltimore staff also found some lessons learned from the first few years of the initiative:

- Increased property values are not enough to revitalize a neighborhood. Residents must become civically engaged in order to make this truly successful. In Baltimore, staff found that resident engagement in block projects is the best way to build momentum for community change. Residents will not only participate in some physical revitalization efforts that are highly visible, they will also develop a social network with their neighbors.
- Replace negative language with positive symbols. Homebuyers will not want to move to the neighborhood simply because something bad has been removed; rather, they need positive signifiers to attract them to the neighborhood.

- Marketing and publicity are just as important as the positive changes they promote. It is essential to make successes known to the outside world, not just to partners and funders. Publicity will attract outside funding. In the Healthy Neighborhood approach, positive marketing also contributes to the success of the program by increasing the demand for housing.
- “Building from strength” is a difficult concept to grasp. Community leaders unfamiliar with the Healthy Neighborhoods approach may find it difficult to change their philosophy from one focused on fixing problems to one that builds from strength.
- The local agency with funding should also be the program administrator. Requiring potential borrowers to go back and forth between different agencies injects a layer of bureaucracy that discourages participation.
- Potential borrowers should be treated like customers. The initiative is trying to fight disinvestment in the neighborhood, so the loan application process should be made as simple as possible to encourage use of the system.
- Lead abatement is costly and may discourage some rehabilitation efforts. A possible remedy is to make a loan pool available to homeowners for the costs of lead abatement, including the cost of lead testing.
- Block projects are the best way to build momentum for community change. Residents can get hands-on involvement in the revitalization efforts while at the same time building community with their neighbors. This will inspire interest in Healthy Neighborhoods much more than will below-market rate financing.
- A dedicated rehab specialist will help spur rehabilitation loan use. The rehab specialist helps residents consider what type of work their house needs and what will be the most impactful change for the neighborhood’s appearance.

## Neighborhood and Family Initiative (NFI)

**Sponsor Organization:** Ford Foundation

**Target:** Comprehensive community development in four urban neighborhoods

**Approach:** Launched in 1990, NFI was one of the earliest comprehensive community initiatives. The goal of the 10-year initiative was to improve the physical, social and economic circumstances of the four target neighborhoods by building on and strengthening community strengths (resident leadership) and creating and exploiting synergies among different types of community development (housing, economic, human capital, etc.).

Two principles underlying the initiative are: 1) *comprehensive change* (making use of interrelationships among the social, economic, and physical needs and opportunities of the neighborhood); 2) *organizational collaboration and citizen participation* (resident involvement, public/private collaboration, city/neighborhood collaboration).

Ford did not specify outcomes or a theory of change. Local actors were supposed to identify desired outcomes and the strategy for achieving them based on an assessment of local needs and priorities.

The neighborhoods (in Detroit, Memphis, Milwaukee, and Hartford) were chosen based on four criteria:

- Clear need for intervention
- Neighborhoods had assets on which to build
- Relatively few initiatives already in place
- Availability of a community foundation to act as a local intermediary.

The four neighborhoods chosen are all urban, with 9,000-20,000 residents; have poverty rates ranging from 29% to 52%; and are primarily residential. Despite these commonalities, the neighborhoods each had a different character and different challenges. For example, the Detroit neighborhood was large, poor, and filled with a population that was largely single, male, and transient. The neighborhood was dominated by large institutions (including an art institute, the symphony, and two large medical centers) that had little interaction with neighborhood residents. In contrast, the Memphis neighborhood was small and was dominated by small churches and some primary and secondary schools. As compared to Detroit, the neighborhood had a much higher homeownership rate, more residential stability, and more resident connection to the neighborhood.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** The kinds of programs differed significantly from site to site, and in most cases were quite small – discrete, time-limited projects, the impact of which was limited to those individuals directly involved. Programs included:

- Increased access to existing services and some new supportive services;
- Connections to jobs in the city and economic development activities;
- Physical revitalization, e.g., housing repair, beautification, renovation to commercial facilities;
- Leveraging of resources for neighborhood improvement.

*Leadership Structure:* Each site had a community foundation that served as a local intermediary and was the direct grantee. The community foundations selected the target neighborhoods, hired staff directors, created a neighborhood collaborative to act as local governing structure, and managed the Ford funding.

The neighborhood collaboratives included residents, business owners and professionals, and professionals from the city's private, public, and nonprofit sectors. The collaboratives were charged with identifying neighborhood needs, developing strategies to address those needs, and overseeing implementation activities.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** Ford provided approximately \$3 million for operations and program support in each of the four sites, plus dedicated support for TA and evaluations. Grant period varied from 9 months to 3 years. Ford established a program-related investment fund of \$3 million managed by a national intermediary for the local initiatives to draw on for development projects.

The funding allocation was not consistent throughout the demonstration, however, which proved problematic. For three years there was a \$1 million yearly grant, followed by a series of 18-month \$500,000 grants. Evaluators found that shortening the grant period made grantees question Ford's commitment to the initiative.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** The series of evaluation reports by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago are very informative, and quite critical of the initiative (Chaskin et al, 2000). Some of the key findings are summarized here:

- *The “comprehensive” vision proved very difficult to implement.* The concept was too broad to be effectively implemented, and as a result the collaboratives were unable to organize activities in the synergistic ways that the demonstration anticipated and much of the program activities turned out to be relatively traditional, narrow in scope, and targeted to a particular set of outcomes without clear relationship to neighborhood change.
- *The initial funding was not sufficient to effect comprehensive change.* In addition, uncertainty around funding discouraged long-term planning, and the funding that could be leveraged from other sources tended to be for discrete projects, not “comprehensive” initiatives. Sites were not well prepared for the end of the demonstration and had little training in how to continue to leverage funding after the main funder was no longer involved. Ford should have set a clear exit strategy.
- *The collaborative structure did not survive beyond the demonstration.* The collaborative relationships among organizations focused on information sharing and complementing each other's activities, and were most successful when organized around specific projects. But collaboration had costs – in terms of the time and commitment required – and there needed to be incentives to collaboration. A broad mandate to collaborate was not effective.
- *The leadership structure was not successful across all sites because of the ambiguity of Ford's role and because of insider/outsider tensions between the community foundations and the collaboratives.* Where they existed, effective partnerships between community foundations and collaborations took a long time to develop. Ultimately, the collaboratives chose to incorporate themselves as independent nonprofits to gain autonomy from the community foundations; the community foundations also wanted to eliminate the collaborative structure so as to have a more traditional funder/grantee relationship.
- *Neighborhood change resulting from NFI was at a very small scale.* The impact of most NFI-funded projects was limited, with the exception of some of the more capital-intensive programs (housing development, career-path employment, physical redevelopment). The most obvious changes in the neighborhood have been due to much larger infusions of capital by private developers and public-sector initiatives such as EZ/EC. NFI projects tended to support these other efforts rather than generate neighborhood change themselves.

- *Sites were reluctant to conduct local evaluations.* Dedicated funding was not initially set aside for local evaluations, so sites viewed evaluations as taking away from program activity. Local evaluators also felt at odds with the national evaluator as the two tiers appeared to have contradictory goals.
- *There needs to be good, grounded knowledge of the neighborhood from the outset.* Do not create a one-size-fits all revitalization model. Each neighborhood is different, with its own strengths, weaknesses, and needs. The goals and outcome measures for the initiative must also take this into account.
- *Be aware of the complexities in working with different stakeholders.* Residents may not have the vocabulary or training necessary to relate to community planners or consultants. Disparate interests and opinions may create tension in a planning board consisting of residents, community builders, and those with resources (banks, local government, institutions). Actual or perceived power imbalances can disrupt the goal of building partnerships.

## Rebuilding Communities Initiative

**Sponsor Organization:** Annie E. Casey Foundation

**Target:** Strengthening families and communities in distressed neighborhoods.

**Approach:** The Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI) was launched in 1993 as an effort to build the capacity of distressed neighborhoods to change their communities into safe and supportive places. RCI, funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation, funded lead neighborhood agencies in five cities across the country. The initiative had goals of improving housing and infrastructure, increasing capital investments in the neighborhood, using neighborhood institutions to improve their capacity, developing collaboratives of local agencies who could eventually take over the project, using existing capital to maximize impact on the neighborhood, and increasing residents' power.

*Leadership Structure:* CBOs led the initiative in the five neighborhoods, though the collaborative nature of the leadership differed slightly by site. Some sites chose to incorporate separate organizations that would lead RCI, while others created subsets of their own organization. CBOs were chosen based on proven success, their standing in the community, and their ability to lead a community-driven effort.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** The initiative was divided into three phases: planning, capacity building, and implementation. In the first phase, the lead agency in each neighborhood collaborated with residents to develop a comprehensive plan. In the second phase, the sites looked for other sources of capital, developed their abilities, refined their plans, and created partnerships. In the third phase, the sites used the skills they have learned to address one or more issues in the neighborhood.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** The Annie E. Casey Foundation is the main sponsor of this initiative. The total funding for this project from AEFCF was over \$15 million over the course of 7 years, totaling over \$3 million per neighborhood. Lead agencies were selected in each of the 5

communities. These agencies formed partnerships with other agencies in the area, as well as with local governments, residents, and community groups.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** AECF measured some positive outcomes from the initiative:

- Lead agencies improved their staff, management systems, and resources.
- All partners improved their ability to use data and evaluation techniques.
- Communities strengthened their images, thereby increasing their ability to attract outside investors.
- Lead agencies increased their collaboration with other agencies.

There were also lessons learned about the process of forming and implementing a comprehensive community initiative:

- CCIs suffer from high expectations and meager resources.
- Collaborations can be difficult when local agencies with long histories are forced to interact. The lead agency may face resentment from smaller partners and residents because of the perceived inevitability of the larger agency's agenda. Successful CBOs may not feel comfortable functioning as an equal participant in a collaboration.
- Resident-led governance boards were politically contentious. Long-standing community leaders refused to participate in the initiative when they were not given total authority.
- It took a long time for the local sites to trust the TA providers. Initially, TA providers met only with Casey for guidance. It was ultimately decided that TA providers would work for the RCI – not for Casey and not for the local sites – which meant TA providers were accountable to both groups. This approach of a co-planning TA provider can also help reduce the funder-grantee power imbalance.

Despite the successes of the Rebuilding Communities Initiative, agencies and residents struggled a great deal with the goals and plans set by AECF. The challenges they faced helped AECF build better partnerships with agencies in future initiatives (see Making Connections).

## Making Connections

**Sponsor Organization:** Annie E. Casey Foundation

**Target:** Strengthening families in “tough” neighborhoods.

**Approach:** The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched Making Connections in 1999. The program will span 10 years in 22 cities in an effort to improve the lives of families and children in “tough” neighborhoods. Tough neighborhoods are distressed or disadvantaged neighborhoods, although branding them as “tough” connotes the resiliency of the residents who live in them. The AECF believes the guiding principle that “children do better when their families are strong and families do better when they live in places that help them succeed as parents and productive citizens.” The key goals of the initiative are:

- To create the opportunity to earn a living wage and promote asset-building;
- Strengthening connections among families, neighbors, religious organizations, and civic groups; and
- Increasing the availability of reliable social services within the neighborhoods.



**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** AECF provides technical assistance to local agencies and community groups, building on local expertise whenever possible. AECF also works to build local partners (local learning partnerships or LLPs) at each site who can put together data on the neighborhood and work with residents to analyze the data to determine where the greatest neighborhood needs and greatest assets are. LLPs are a consortia of researchers, consultants, community residents, and government representatives created with the intent of developing data warehouses that can be made accessible to the sites to establish a baseline and track progress. The LLPs help facilitate a learning agenda for self-evaluation. The Foundation also encourages networking and communication among the sites and has an extensive media center to disperse information about the initiative.

Sites were chosen based on the following criteria:

- A policy environment that was conducive to the AECF mission;
- The presence of some family-oriented revitalization already underway; and
- A track record of achievement in family-centric revitalization.

Of the twenty-two sites initially chosen to participate, ten are currently fully active Making Connections sites. Within that ten, there are two cohorts: five sites that were better prepared at the start of the initiative and are currently in the implementation phase and five sites that are still in the planning phase. AECF chose the target neighborhoods within each city with input from the sites. The hopes is that success through Making Connections in target neighborhoods will be an entry point for larger scale intervention in the city.

Sites are expected to define revitalization plans that are the most useful to their local community needs. Each site may focus on one area at any given time, but all sites must work toward focusing on the three target areas of economic development, social networks, and supportive services.

*Leadership Structure:* The leadership structure is purposefully undefined by AECF. Casey wanted the communities to define the leadership structure and to provide broad support for revitalization initiatives rather than defining a specific organizational structure. Local agencies and community groups generally lead the initiative locally, with significant partnering, although assembling the local partners generally has taken 2-3 years.

Each Making Connections site has a site team leader who is an AECF staff person. The team leader forms relationships with residents of the community and communicates the intent of the program. Additional AECF staff support the site team leader but the number varies by site. After an unspecified amount of time, Casey site teams transfer the leadership to a local coordinator so that there is community ownership of the project.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** The Annie E. Casey Foundation is the primary sponsor of this program, although their funding acts primarily as seed money with other agencies providing additional assistance. All ten active sites receive a core amount of funding from AECF, but the use of that funding varies greatly across sites. This funding will be disbursed over time as projects develop; there is no set disbursement schedule.

AECF works with different agencies in different ways, depending on local needs. Local partners include government officials, faith communities and faith leaders, schools, community organizations and leaders, and local residents. In this and other efforts, Casey partners with agencies such as United

Way of America, Points of Light Foundation, Goodwill Industries, the National Governors Association, Conference of Mayors, and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** This initiative is still in progress, but AECF has set goals for achieving the following outcomes by the end of the initiative:

- Families will have increased assets, earnings, and income;
- Civic participation will increase;
- Children will be healthy and well-prepared for school; and
- Communities and families will have strong ties and support networks among them.

In addition to the goals AECF has set for the initiative, some early results have been promising. More than half of the MC sites worked together in 2002 to expand access and awareness of the Earned Income Tax Credit in their communities. The MC sites worked with free tax preparation sites in an effort to increase EITC usage and reduce the reliance on paid tax preparers. Ultimately, the residents got \$51 million in tax preparation fee savings and EITC refunds.

In Denver, residents formed a new parent-led organization to address issues of concern about their children's education, including safety, attendance, and academics. This new group is helping to bridge the gap between low-income parents and their children's schools. The Denver MC site has also held numerous meetings to work on a town-wide consensus for how to go about strengthening families.

In Des Moines, the MC team has worked to eliminate predatory lending in the area. The team formed partnerships with local banks and Fannie Mae to create a program to buy back high-interest loans in an effort to reduce interest rates for families paying too much. The team has also been successful in raising awareness of this problem and getting state and city laws enacted to combat predatory lending.

The Hartford MC team has a program to help disadvantaged youths get and keep quality jobs. The program works with well-established businesses to create mentoring relationships with youths referred through social service agencies, many of who have had run-ins with the juvenile justice system. Ninety-six percent of program graduates are still in their jobs or in school.

In Indianapolis, the mayor has recently been granted the power to create five new charter schools per year. The application process to become a charter school includes an emphasis on transportation barriers for families in tough neighborhoods and how to solve these barriers. The MC team has also worked on creating a community school in a formerly abandoned high school that now offers adult education, recreation, and social services to the neighborhood.

The Louisville MC team has created an asset-building coalition in partnership with local banks, churches, CBOs, hospitals, and other groups. The Coalition is involved in the promotion of the EITC to neighborhood residents. The increased outreach and free tax preparation sites could bring as much as \$2 million in EITC refunds back into the community. The team has also started an IDA program that matches saved money 2 to 1. The program now has 140 participants with 200 people on the waiting list.

# Neighborhood Preservation Initiative

**Sponsor Organization:** Pew Charitable Trusts

**Target:** Revitalization of working-class neighborhoods

**Approach:** NPI was a partnership between the Pew Charitable Trusts, local foundations, local community organizations, and residents of working class neighborhoods in nine cities. Established in 1993, the three-year NPI demonstration had primary goals of assisting residents of working class neighborhoods to visibly improve their neighborhoods while learning how to sustain this type of neighborhood preservation themselves in the future. The premise behind this initiative is that philanthropists and government subsidies often overlook working class neighborhoods because they are not the most distressed areas. These neighborhoods often still need revitalization. NPI sought to prevent neighborhoods from succumbing to neighborhood decline by strengthening assets already in the community. By making small investments to prevent decline, NPI efforts ultimately prevented expenditures of the larger sums necessary to repair blighted neighborhoods. Visible neighborhood improvement is achieved when several types of revitalization efforts are put into place at once. Residents were encouraged to plan and set priorities for local initiatives with the belief that resident involvement will help sustain the new improvements after the initiative ended.

NPI began with four goals:

1. Be a catalyst for revitalization in these neighborhoods;
2. Create visibility for the revitalization effort such that additional funding is leveraged;
3. Build capacity to continue this work; and
4. Send the neighborhood in a positive direction.

The sites were selected from urban areas with a population of over 1 million. These locations also needed to have community foundations that with annual grant activity of \$2.5 million or more. The neighborhoods selected by NPI were originally described as “working-class” but the neighborhoods themselves preferred the term “transitional.” This new terminology reflected the fact that the neighborhood was experiencing significant change (usually negative) that deserved to be addressed. The following types of change are considered indicators of a transitional neighborhood:

- Significant recent changes in demographics (age, race, ethnicity);
  - Recent population gain or loss in conjunction with increasing diversity;
  - Loss of jobs or local companies; relocation of churches and community institutions to the suburbs;
  - Reduced participation in civic organizations;
  - A trend toward rental rather than homeownership units, with an increasing number of absentee landlords;
  - Increasing numbers of vacant or blighted residential or commercial buildings; and
  - Changes in the local school system that negatively impacted the community-school relationship.
- Working-class neighborhoods tend to have homeownership rates, household incomes, and employment rates at or near the citywide average.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** NPI grantees ran programs in one or more of four focus areas: crime prevention, economic opportunity, physical revitalization, and youth development. Sites designed programs that best met local needs based on the preferences and priorities of residents. NPI provided technical assistance through conferences and sites were encouraged to learn from each other. The NPI philosophy is that the energy and commitment of community groups is more important than targeting specific activities. Regardless of what revitalization tools are used, energy and momentum from committed community groups will produce the greatest “bang for your buck” every time. The initiative can start small and build off of early successes if the community groups offer their full support.

In Kansas City, KS, the following specific tools were used:

- Facilitating the continued success of positive trends by establishing multi-year planning strategies.
- Inspiring homeowners to improve and maintain the appearance of their neighborhood.
- Working with the local lending and appraisal community to ensure that private lending is readily available and appraisals are fair.
- Improving public perceptions of the safety of the town, not just focusing on negative crime indicators.

*Leadership Structure:* NPI formed partnerships with 9 local foundations to administer its funding at the local level. These foundations selected 10 strong community based organizations (2 in St. Paul, 1 in every other city) and the local organizations led the initiative. Five were community or economic development corporations and five were community or resident groups. Agencies were chosen based on capacity, track record, and long-time operations. In the case of organizations that had only done housing in the past, NPI required the agencies to establish that they had the interest, commitment, and ability to address the non-housing aspects of the initiative. The organization’s true relationship with the neighborhood was also considered. Site visits to the organizations helped establish whether the interaction with the neighborhood was cursory or truly deep. Foundations were responsible for obtaining the 50% local match.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** This program was initially funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, with each participating foundation responsible for obtaining 50% in match funds. The Pew Charitable Trusts gave three-year project grants to nine foundations in 1994, totaling \$6.6 million. Communities could each receive up to \$800,000 over three years with the condition of a 50% local match. The total investment across all sites was \$8.5 million (\$6.6 million in grants), with combined national and local funding yielding a \$1 million annual budget per site per year for three years.

The following foundations acted as local partners: The Boston Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, The Indianapolis Foundation, Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, The Milwaukee Foundation, The Philadelphia Foundation, The St. Paul Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation. Among the lead agencies in the initiative, five are neighborhood associations or community resources centers and five are community or economic development corporations.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government did an evaluation and the Cornerstone Consulting Group (the initiative management firm after the original project director left) produced two evaluative reports with lessons learned. Several years after the

initiative's completion, all of the local agencies and their NPI-started programs are still in operation. Organizations were generally not able to completely replace the national funding after the demonstration ended, but they have diversified their funding sources in order to meet the additional need.

The outcome measures for NPI were not as rigorous as some national initiatives. The Program Director believed that positive change should be measured by what "you can see with your own eyes." The evaluation reported positive changes (without quantifying them) in the following areas: expanded employment opportunities, increased access to public transportation, economic redevelopment of commercial districts, improved housing stock, rehabilitation of blighted units, and maintenance of the owner-renter distribution.

More specifically, in Kansas the initiative helped produce lower crime rates, increased mortgage lending resources, increased property values, and established higher standards of property maintenance. Average housing sales prices increased 28% over the 1995-1999 period; the neighborhood association more than quadrupled its membership; volunteers repaired 415 homes; and numerous blighted and vacant buildings were demolished or rehabilitated.

Although specific outcome measures were not specified by NPI, the program did require local sites to submit a strategic plan. NPI conducted site visits and follow-up to ensure that sites were following their strategic plan and provided assistance when needed to overcome barriers. It is important to note, however, that after the demonstration phase was over, sites found it difficult to obtain additional funding without concrete outcomes measures.

Additionally, some process lessons were learned about CCIs:

- *A comprehensive framework is the most powerful way to achieve neighborhood revitalization.* When different groups work on different aspects of the project, in the end they all fit together to create comprehensive change.
- *It is important to work with established organizations if you have limited resources.* Do not try to build a new organization. Real estate projects involve concrete activities that result in visible capital investments, while non-real estate projects function on a continuous basis and outcomes are not immediately visible or concrete. These two types of projects require different management styles. NPI considered organizations that had only done housing in the past, but required these organizations to establish that they had interest, commitment, and the ability to address the non-housing aspects of the initiative.
- *There will always be tensions between the funder and the grantee.* The funder should try to minimize these tensions by making intentions clear from the outset and giving local sites sufficient autonomy.
- *Racial politics should be addressed by the initiative.* Race is an overlooked and unattended issue in community development. There is no perfect tool for addressing racial issues, but the initiative cannot ignore this factor of daily life in the communities.
- *Neighborhoods will never be freed from the need to revitalize.* Maintaining the positive changes in a revitalized neighborhood requires constant vigilance. Outside forces will continue to threaten neighborhood stability.
- *"Sustainability" has a different definition for residents and foundations.* While funders may define sustainability as secured additional funding and continued program functions, residents

- tend to define it as a feeling and spirit in the neighborhood that positive change and civic engagement will continue. The resident definition may be impossible to measure.
- *Neighborhood-level outcome measurements are not always appropriate.* In areas such as workforce development or economic development, citywide or several neighborhood-wide measurements may be more telling.

## The Pew Partnership Small Cities Initiative

**Sponsor Organization:** The Pew Charitable Trusts/The Pew Partnership

**Target:** Evaluating how community residents make lasting community changes, using small cities as the learning tool.

**Approach:** The Pew Partnership, which was formed by the Pew Charitable Trusts, solicited applications from more than 100 cities across the country to participate in the small cities initiative in 1992. Fourteen communities were selected in 1993 to participate in the three-year program. This initiative sought to determine how community residents make significant and permanent changes to their communities. Smaller cities were chosen for this initiative because it was thought that the ways in which residents make choices and effect change would be easier to witness in a smaller community. The lessons learned in these small cities could then be applied to cities of all sizes. Each city chose a project to use as a means to learn about the civic change process in addition to achieving the project's immediate goals (such as mentoring at-risk youth).

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** Local programs covered a wide range of social service and community revitalization goals. Programs included enrichment and mentoring programs for at-risk youth, Family Resource Centers, workforce development, diversity training, affordable housing preservation, and economic development. One program in Western North Carolina spanned 22 counties of small, rural communities and used the local handmade crafts tradition to spur community development and revitalization.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** The Pew Charitable Trusts (via the Pew Partnership) funded this project. The Pew Partnership granted \$6 million (in grants and technical assistance) to 14 communities in 1993. Each city was given up to \$400,000 over a three-year period. Eight of these cities received an additional \$50,000 in funding from Pew for an additional one-year of operations. The partner groups were required to provide at least a 25% local match. Ultimately, more than \$27 million in public and private investment was leveraged because of the initial Pew investment.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** This initiative had both an experimental component, namely determining how communities effect civic change, as well as a concrete component – the individual projects in the study cities. Outcomes include:

- A broad-based partnership in Santa Fe helped 369 low-income residents move into homeownership through the development of new housing units.
- The Family Resource Center in West Virginia has been so successful in Charleston that the model is being used in other cities across the state.

- In rural Western North Carolina, an additional \$4.4 million in new investments were made in the area between 1996 and 1998. In addition, 24 new businesses were started and businesses included in a guidebook funded by the initiative experienced sales increases of 20%.
- Mentoring and peer counseling of Native American youth in Rapid City, SD helped dramatically reduce the number of fights involving these students in local middle schools.
- Five hundred summer jobs were created in Lane County, OR through its mentoring and networking program for youth.

## Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program

**Sponsor Organization:** Minneapolis City Council

**Target:** City-wide revitalization with a focus on housing

**Approach:** The NRP was established by the Minnesota State Legislature and the Minneapolis City Council in 1990. Twenty million dollars per year for twenty years was allocated to this project, to be taken from city tax revenues. Housing programs must make up 52.5% of NRP's expenditures. Neighborhoods within the city must develop Neighborhood Action Plans that address a variety of issues, including housing, transportation, job creation, and community spaces.

Neighborhoods applying for NRP funding must follow a six-step process:

1. Elect a steering committee with a plan for structured meetings and events.
2. Identify needs and opportunities in the neighborhood through local data.
3. Create a plan for the proposed initiatives.
4. Allow for public comment of the plan, incorporating resident suggestions.
5. Submit neighborhood plan to overseeing NRP agency for approval and funding.
6. Once the plan is approved, volunteers can begin the implementation process.

Minneapolis NRP differs from most community initiatives because it truly gives citizens the power to make change in their neighborhoods. This is both its key strength and its key obstacle. The project continuously struggles between letting citizens have full autonomy in the process versus setting guidelines for the project at a city level.

**Key Revitalization Activities and Tools:** Neighborhoods participating in NRP have a variety of tools available to them. These tools include additional financing sources (Housing Trust Fund, Single-family mortgage revenue bond program), existing laws (Tax Increment Finance Districts, Locational policies and design guidelines, Inclusionary Zoning), and an online database of previously approved neighborhood plans and projects.

NRP neighborhoods are classified into one of three descriptive categories. Board members are appointed based on representations from the following groups:

- *Protection neighborhoods* are neighborhoods that are experiencing few social, physical, and economic problems, but have concerns about the delivery of public services;

- *Revitalization neighborhoods* are neighborhoods that are fundamentally sound but are beginning to experience some social, physical, and economic problems;
- *Redirection neighborhoods* are neighborhoods experiencing serious social, physical, and economic problems.

*Leadership Structure:* The NRP is governed by a policy board made up of members from the five branches of city government (city, schools, library, county, and parks/recreation), community group members (Chamber of Commerce), nonprofit and foundation representatives (United Way and Minneapolis Foundation), and private citizens. NRP staff called Neighborhood Specialists and Team Leaders oversee the planning process at the neighborhood level by attending neighborhood steering committee meetings. NRP staff members ensure that the planning process goes smoothly and follows the correct procedures, but residents make the plan decisions.

The resident leadership structure has changed significantly over time. At the start of NRP, traditional activists who were already leaders in local community groups led the resident involvement efforts. After more than ten years of NRP, there is now a new crop of community leaders. The new leaders have seen the power of NRP and, according to NRP's director, are more creative, are more aware of the bigger picture, and are much less likely to have projects dictated to them by other community actors.

The projects neighborhoods are pursuing have also changed over time. The first projects tackled were the most obvious issues that needed addressing that required relatively little cooperation across neighborhoods. These included renovation of local parks, community centers, and schools as well as traffic abatement and home improvement loans. As some of these problems have been solved, neighborhoods have begun to address larger issues – such as the revitalization of a commercial corridor spanning 14 neighborhoods – that require cooperation, collaboration, and more funding sources. Neighborhoods have increased their cooperation over time – there are well over 200 agreements in place between neighborhoods.

**Partners, Funders, and Resources:** The City Council established the NRP in 1990 and committed \$20 million per year for 20 years for a total of \$400 million. Refinancing tax increment districts within the downtown area created the funding source for the entire initiative. However, state tax legislation passed in 2001 rearranged the way property tax rates are calculated, which greatly reduced expected revenues for NRP. The amount of funding was somewhat variable in the two years following this change, but in the summer of 2003 \$58 million was allocated for years 2003-2009. This reduces average funding to \$8.3 million per year in Phase II of the initiative. However, NRP funding was never intended to fund the entire redevelopment needed in Minneapolis. Total physical revitalization costs are estimated at \$3 billion and NRP funding was intended to be start-up money for this process.

Individual neighborhoods can use NRP funding to leverage other local funding sources and community resources. Most leveraged funding or service-in-kind has come from other city government departments with very few resources coming from foundations or the private sector.

Funding for each neighborhood is based on an allocation formula that results in more distressed neighborhoods receiving more funding. The formula is based on the following five factors:



- Neighborhood population;
- Number of dwelling units;
- Number of units administered by absentee landlords;
- Number of substandard units; and
- Index of low-economic status based on average income, economic assistance cases, and health statistics.

Neighborhood housing and poverty variables made up 48% of this formula in Phase I but will make up 87% of the formula in Phase II. Distressed neighborhoods should get more funding based on this change.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:** Neighborhoods are responsible for assessing the impact of their work and determining whether goals have been met. However, NRP has also funded a very thorough independent evaluation covering the first 10 years of the program. The evaluation attempts to quantify neighborhood impact and impact on beneficiaries as well as document program outcomes. Following are selected findings (for the period 1990-1999):

*Survey results (survey of 1,100 residents):*

- 66% of adults surveyed had heard of the program;
- 90% of adults surveyed support the program.

*Housing outputs:*

- 46% of NRP allocations were for housing and housing-related activities (short of the mandated 52.5%);
- 4,775 home improvement grants and loans, mainly to homeowners for housing rehab;
- 675 rental units built or renovated (small amount of NRP funding);
- 80% of households assisted were homeowners;
- Revitalization neighborhoods provided the most home improvement assistance and homebuyer assistance; redirection neighborhoods did more rental development; protection neighborhoods did little more than home improvement lending.

*Allocation of funds between housing and economic development and by neighborhood type:*

- Economic development constituted 15% of all NRP allocations, and schools, parks, arts, and culture ranged from 6% to 7%;
- Redirection neighborhoods spent the highest share of their funds on economic development and human services and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest share on housing; revitalization neighborhoods spent the highest share on housing, followed by economic development; protection neighborhoods spent the least on housing and economic development of the three neighborhood types and spent the most on parks, community building, and plan coordination.

*Targeting of funds by neighborhood type:*

- Neighborhoods with the highest needs (redirection neighborhoods) received the most funding, as did larger neighborhoods. The poorest neighborhoods received 2.5 times the funding as the highest income neighborhoods, and revitalization neighborhoods received 1.5 times the funding of protection neighborhoods;
- The average neighborhood allocation was \$1,068/household. Spending was \$225 higher per household in the more impoverished neighborhoods vs. the higher income neighborhoods.

For neighborhoods with higher and lower percentages of people of color, the difference in allocation was \$449 per household.

*Process findings:*

- *Foundations and CDCs have their own agendas, which are not necessarily in line with the community's agenda.* Foundations also tend to fund only discrete projects through NRP.
- *Make data available to sites from the beginning.* PlanNet NRP, a database of project plans, demographics, and neighborhood-level data, is a valuable tool that could have been useful to sites throughout the initiative.
- *The resident-led model of NRP makes neighborhoods accountable for their success in revitalization.* Residents define the problem, plan a solution, implement the plan, and are responsible for the impact. This level of ownership is a significant motivator.
- *A politically independent governance structure is the key to success.* Because the NRP Policy Board is made up of representatives from across city government and residents, no one political agenda can take over.
- *There must be a training program for resident volunteers.* Residents need guidance in how to plan and implement a community revitalization initiative. Guidance is needed to help residents determine what is feasible. The process of planning and training volunteers could take several years.
- *Residents need a guiding force to help them continue the process.* Although NRP is scheduled to be a twenty-year program, its Executive Director expects it will be around in some form for the rest of the century. Residents need a lead organization to act as a catalyst and to help find resources to continue the revitalization effort.

## **Asset-Based Community Development**

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to community revitalization focuses on identifying and then capitalizing on local assets (rather than identifying and focusing on problems and deficiencies). This approach focuses on the skills of citizens, the dedication of community organizations, and the resources of formal institutions in the community. The goal is to bring these assets together and strengthen them to help revitalize the neighborhood. This approach is relationship driven, such that leaders must constantly strive to build and reinforce the connections between residents, associations, and institutions. Underlying this philosophy is the idea that federal and state government approaches to assist distressed neighborhoods have created a paternal, needy society that looks to the government and social service agencies for support rather than solving problems its own problems.

This approach is championed by the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research. The Institute is funded by the Chicago Community Trust in conjunction with the Kinship Foundation. The ABCD Institute also sells its workbooks and tools to community developers.

There are a number of applications of asset-based approach. For example, the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) promotes at the competitive advantage of inner city locations as a business location. The idea is that there are hidden financial assets in communities that don't show up as the traditional assets that businesses look at, but these locating in these communities can be very advantageous for businesses. The EZ/EC evaluation found that the city of Detroit did a good job of

convincing businesses that they should locate in EZ because they could get better space and buildings at a tremendous discount.

Asset-based development is also used in the context of land assembly strategies and strategies for the redevelopment of existing structures. “Asset mapping” is also a fairly common tool used to help communities identify their assets.

## Smart Growth America

The concept behind smart growth is that current growth patterns in metropolitan areas are weakening urban economies and environmental conditions and increasing racial and economic disparities. Further, these patterns are caused by government policies that result in a shift of population and jobs from cities to suburbs, and from older suburbs to newer exurbs (adapted from Katz, 2002).

The smart growth agenda revolves around changing the state “rules of the development game” to slow decentralization, promote urban reinvestment and promote development that is mixed use, transit-oriented, and pedestrian friendly. Smart growth prioritizes the use of existing infrastructure and attempts to limit the sprawl of new infrastructure and concurrent public services into undeveloped areas. In addition, smart growth policies define core areas to make them self-sufficient—including housing, work, transportation, shopping, and recreation.

Smart Growth America (SGA) is a coalition of more than 100 national, state, and local advocacy organizations that support the smart growth concept. SGA works in four core areas: coalition building, communications, policy development, and research. Tools and concepts promoted by SGA include:

- Encouraging mixed land uses
- Building on existing community assets
- Creating a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Fostering walkable, “close knit” communities
- Promoting distinctive communities with a strong sense of place, including the rehabilitation and use of historic buildings
- Strengthening and encouraging growth in existing communities
- Providing a variety of transportation options
- Citizen and stakeholder participation in development decisions

States have been the focus for creating a smart growth framework of law, program, and policy. State smart growth agendas generally consists of five sets of complementary policies:

- New forms of metropolitan (regional) governance;
- Land use reforms to manage growth at the metropolitan fringe;
- Initiatives to conserve land threatened by development and clean up land in older communities;
- Spending and tax incentives for infrastructure improvements in older communities;
- Tax sharing/metropolitan resource pooling;

Many cities are also enacting housing plans that respond to smart growth concerns: connecting housing to transportation, limiting sprawl by encouraging in-fill development and higher density use in core areas, addressing the jobs-housing connection, encouraging mixed-use and mixed-income development.

Maryland has been at the forefront of the smart growth movement, but little is known about the effectiveness of the state's smart growth program. There was no evaluation as of August 2002, but some evaluation indicators have since been proposed so we can expect an evaluation at some point.

## **Category B Pilot Program**

**Sponsor Organization:** Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation

The Category B Pilot Program was a national demonstration of “strategies that revitalize communities through homeownership.” Congress provided funding to Neighborhood Reinvestment for the two-year pilot as part of a broader effort to increase homeownership opportunities for low-income households. Within this broad goal, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation developed three funding categories—Categories A, B, and C—with specific objectives designed to accommodate different levels of capacity among organizations in the NeighborWorks® network supported by the Corporation. A total of \$25 million was authorized for the broader demonstration in fiscal years 1999 and 2000. Category B sites received grants of \$500,000, at least two-thirds of which was to be used for lending capital, with the balance available for operating expenses and to pay for a local researcher.

The nine network organizations selected for the Category B Pilot were organizations with proven capacity in producing homeownership units, assisting at least 70 new homeowners each year. Although some of the sites had begun to develop neighborhood-based programs, most had focused on building capacity to serve homebuyers in general. As a result, the NeighborWorks organizations entered the pilot with different levels of familiarity with neighborhood revitalization and how homeownership relates to neighborhood outcomes. They also presumably had different expectations for how participation in the Pilot would affect their organizations.

Neighborhood Reinvestment began the Pilot with a five-day training workshop designed to articulate the goals of the demonstration and the theory of neighborhood change. The Pilot defined a healthy neighborhood as “a place where it makes economic sense for people to invest their time, money, and energy, and where neighbors manage change successfully.” The revitalization strategy articulated in the Pilot was to strengthen and restore confidence in the neighborhood by encouraging people to purchase homes in the neighborhood and existing homeowners to make high-quality improvements. The strategy was differentiated from affordable housing in that it focused on increasing demand for the neighborhood rather than the supply of housing, offering a range of programs tailored to the neighborhood, serving all income groups, and using proactive marketing and physical improvements to attract newcomers to the neighborhood.

The revitalization theory was similar to the “weak market” approach described above (in the pilot it was referred to as creating “neighborhoods of choice”), although the main focus was on homeownership. During the training workshop, the sites agreed on a set of six measures against which the impact of the Pilot would be assessed: resident satisfaction; physical improvements; perceptions of the market; investment in residential mortgages; changes in property values; and rates

of property vacancy and tax delinquency. In addition to the portion of the grant set aside for local researchers, Neighborhood Reinvestment funded a national evaluation that evaluated individual and cross-site results.

According to both the local and national evaluations, the neighborhood level changes that could be attributed to the Category B Pilot at the end of the two years were modest. The national evaluation, focused on trends in residential investment and neighborhood changes captured by decennial census data, found little impact. The local evaluations tracked a broader range of outcome measures (typically a subset of the six described above) but were either not completed (only baseline data were collected) or showed only isolated gains.

Although the pilot yielded few systematic findings on the extent to which homeownership strategies can be used to increase resident satisfaction, property values, and investment in neighborhoods, it offered some important process lessons. The main lessons of the Category B pilot, as articulated by staff we interviewed at the Neighborhood Reinvestment and NeighborWorks organizations, were as follows:

- Two years was too short a time frame to measure the impact of neighborhood revitalization strategies on neighborhoods. Most sites had only just begun to implement their strategies by the end of the demonstration program. In addition, participating NeighborWorks organizations had a tendency to target too large an area for revitalization given the resources available and time frame for effecting change;
- The pilot was successful in helping some NeighborWorks organizations to begin to “regain their neighborhood revitalization focus.” However, even for these organizations the pilot was typically just the first step in a much longer process of moving toward a place-based approach and then aligning the organization’s programs and activities with the new approach;
- NeighborWorks organizations were selected for the pilot on the basis of their track record in homeownership production, not necessarily their engagement with neighborhood revitalization. This selection process may have screened out organizations that were ahead of the curve on neighborhood revitalization but were not high producers of homeownership assistance.
- One of the most valuable aspects of the pilot from the NeighborWorks organizations’ perspective (in addition to the dedicated funding) was the opportunity that it provided for the exchange of ideas among participating organizations, for example through the week-long planning session. However, the value of this exchange was somewhat limited by major differences among the pilot sites in terms of the local market conditions they were trying to address.
- NeighborWorks organizations found it difficult to balance evaluation activities (data collection and analysis) with program delivery and need to build capacity in this area. Without the assistance of outside consultants (funded by the Neighborhood Reinvestment for the pilot), it would have been very difficult for the sites to develop baseline data against which to measure their progress;

- The pilot's focus on homeownership may have been too prescriptive in that it may have limited other kinds of non-housing activities that contribute to neighborhood revitalization. As a result, the next iteration of the pilot has focused on community organizing.

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